Disinvestment of BVFCL

*355. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. (BVFCL) is going to be disinvested;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(c) what has necessitated the disinvestment when Government had revamped the unit expending more than four hundred crores of rupees and bifurcated it from the sick HFCL?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE) : (a) to (c) The Disinvestment Commission in its 20th Report (May, 2003) has *inter alia* recommended that given the history of losses and poor envisaged profitability of Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation limited (BVFCL), the Government should disinvest up to 74% of its equity in BVFCL to a strategic partner through the competitive bidding route.

In accordance with its declared policy, the Government's equity in all non-strategic Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs), irrespective of being profit making or loss incurring, is to be brought down to 26% or below in generality of cases. BVFCL operates in the non-strategic sector. The Government has not taken a decision on the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission.

Mobile and Internet services in Himachal Pradesh

*356. SHRI ABHAY KANT PRASAD : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the districts in Himachal Pradesh where mobile and internet services are available at present;

(b) by when the said services would be provided in the remaining districts of the State during the current year;

(c) whether there is any proposal to install BSNL service in the State for providing internet facility; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) Mobile Service is available in all the Districts except Keylong and Chamba, and Internet service is available in all the Districts of the State of Himachal Pradesh. Mobile Services are likely to be available in the remaining Districts of Himachal Pradesh during the 2nd Quarter of the current financial year.

(c) and (d) Six Internet nodes of BSNL are already available in Himachal Pradesh for Internet services; expansion of the services is proposed through the augmentation of these existing nodes.

Closure of rural and cottage industries

*357. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY :
SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN :

Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the condition of traditional rural and cottage industries in the country is deteriorating and they are on the verge of closure;

(b) if so, the details in this regard, State-wise; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to revive the rural and cottage industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM) : (a) to (c) The Khadi and Village Industries sector consists essentially of conventional (traditional) rural cottage industries. Government have been taking steps from time to time for the promotion and development of rural and cottage industries with positive results. Assistance provided to this sector consists of margin money assistance under Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP), training, technological and marketing support. In order to further strengthen this sector in the country, the Government on 14-05-2001 announced 'Khadi Package'. The package mainly consists of creation of packaging and design facilities, measures to promote marketing, brand building, cluster development, focus on core areas and provision of additional working capital etc.

As a result, village industries have been registering growth in production and employment. The State-wise performance of Khadi and